

Dec 04 2004

City fetes park purchase -- News Roundup

By Review Staff

City fetes park purchase

More than 60 volunteers and public officials gathered in City Hall Thursday evening, to fete public purchase of 22 acres of the former **Wyckoff** property on Bill Point and a new federal grant to help pay for more land still.

Dan Silver, trustee overseeing the **Wyckoff** land, signed over a deed for the western half of the 50-acre property to the city and the Bainbridge Island Park and Recreation District.

"We can just be thankful we live in a community where this kind of project can be pulled off," said Christine Rolfes, City Council chair and a member of the citizen task force that has worked toward property acquisition.

Funded by grants and private donations, the \$4.9 million deal helps create a waterfront park honoring the late Joel Pritchard, who represented Bainbridge Island in Congress for 12 years and also served as Washington's lieutenant governor.

The portion around Taylor Avenue will be the site of a Japanese American internment memorial, while the sandy beach stretching to the east is already open for public enjoyment. The city, the Trust for Public Land and other groups now have their sights set on the balance of the **Wyckoff** property, polluted by a creosote plant and currently undergoing cleanup by the federal government. To purchase the remaining 27 acres, backers must raise another \$3.1 million by the end of 2005.

That effort got a significant boost with the announcement Thursday of a \$500,000 federal grant secured by U.S. Sen. Patty Murray.

The fund drive will use as its campaign slogan "Get the Point," for the shape of the land jutting out at the mouth of Eagle Harbor.

"We have absolutely no doubt in the world that it's going to happen," acquisition task force member Val Tollefson said.

By Douglas Crist